# Saint Paul Planning Commission City Hall Conference Center 15 Kellogg Boulevard West

# Minutes August 8, 2008

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, August 8, 2008, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

**Commissioners** Mmes. Donnelly-Cohen, Faricy, Lu, Porter, Wencl; and

**Present:** Messrs. Alton, Barrera, Bellus, Commers, Goodlow, Gordon, Johnson, Kramer,

Nelson, Spaulding, and Ward.

**Commissioners** 

Mmes. \*Morton, \*Smitten, and Mr. \*Margulies.

**Absent:** 

\*Excused

**Also Present:** Larry Soderholm, Planning Administrator; Joe Collins, Patricia James, Penelope

Simison, Ellen Muller, Emily Goodman, and Sonja Butler, Department of

Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes July 25, 2008.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Donnelly-Cohen moved approval of the minutes of July 25, 2008. Commissioner Kramer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

### II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Alton had no announcements.

# III. Planning Administrator's Announcements

Larry Soderholm reported on planning-related business at the City Council for last week and their agenda for next week, and gave an update on the lawsuit filed against the City by Clear Channel over the prohibition against billboard extensions.

**IV. PUBLIC HEARING:** <u>Water Resources Management Plan</u> – Item from the Comprehensive Planning Committee. (*Larry Soderholm*, 651/266-6575)

Chair Alton announced that the City of Saint Paul Planning Commission is holding a public hearing on the Water Resources Management Plan. Notice of the public hearing was published in the Legal Ledger on July 24, 2008, and was mailed to the citywide Early Notification System list of recipients and other interested parties.

Larry Soderholm, PED stated that this draft marks the first time that the city has a Water Management Chapter in the Comprehensive Plan. The chapter is unusual in that the technical requirements have already been met and approved by the Metropolitan Council, so the purpose of the document is to make water policy that already exists more understandable to the public and better connected to other Comp Plan chapters. Mr. Soderholm noted that the Water Chapter is longer than the other draft chapters, so the staff is going to edit it down before bringing it back to the Commission for final action. Mr. Soderholm expressed thanks to George Johnson, who is an environmental scientist and the chair of the task force, and Yung-Kang Lu, who has a background in environmental policy and was an active member. Mr. Soderholm noted that the Commission has received written statements from the Tri-Area Block Club, which represents the neighborhood adjoining the Trillium parkland site, the Capitol Regional Watershed District, and Tom Dimond. Mr. Soderholm concluded by summarizing the major strategies of the chapter.

Commissioner Johnson echoed Mr. Soderholm's praise for the task force and thanked Yung-Kang Lu for chairing the meetings that he couldn't attend. He also thanked City staff, including Planning Aide Andrew Jacobson, and the interested citizens who came to many of the task force meetings even though they were not members.

Chair Alton read the rules of procedure for the public hearing.

The following people spoke.

- 1. Mark Doneux, Administrator for the Capitol Region Watershed District. 1410 Energy Park Drive. Mr. Doneux thanked the City for including the CRWD in this process, which helped them to understand the City's perspective. All the efforts to improve water quality and to reduce the risk of flooding should be recognized. The CRWD had three suggestions and recommendations for the draft. 1) Volume control for surface runoff: the City should adopt a volume control standards citywide and include a standard for developments of less than one acre, down to 10,000 square feet. 2) City operations that affect water, particularly the sanding and salting of streets: the impacts of a variety of City operations and "house keeping practices" should be evaluated to reduce non-point source pollution. 3) Cooperative efforts: the City and watershed districts need to collaborate, but they need the help and support of other participants as well. Public education is emphasized in the plan, but it will take concerted action to implement the recommendations. Partnerships are always important since water is continuously moving across jurisdictional lines. Mr. Doneux said the Commission has these comments in a letter.
- 2. Tom Dimond, 2119 Skyway Drive, Saint Paul, MN. Mr. Dimond encouraged the Planning Commission to make the policies in the plan stronger regarding the protection and restoration of both shorelands and wetlands. For shorelands, the plan currently says the City should wait to enact new shoreland management regulations until the DNR orders the City to do so. Mr. Dimond believes the City should be more proactive and adopt model ordinance standards now, just to catch up with what most other communities in Minnesota have already done. For wetlands, the plan says what steps should be taken, but it doesn't clearly state that the City's policy is to increase the acreage and quality of wetlands in the city. The plan should also give a more complete explanation of why wetlands are productive and valuable; they provide food and shelter for plants, fish, birds, and other species, some of which are endangered. The Mississippi River Flyway is the largest flyway for migratory birds in North America. Too

many people today look at wetlands as under-utilized land. Mr. Dimond said the Commission has his comments in written form in his letter.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Spaulding moved to close the public hearing, and leave the record open for written testimony submitted by noon on Monday, August 11, 2008, and to refer the matter back to the Comprehensive Planning Committee for review and recommendation. Commissioner Ward seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

# V. Zoning Committee

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#08-047-384 Steven Tusa – Determination that a temporary mold making and repair shop is similar to a home occupation. 1072 Wilson Avenue between Frank and Earl. (*Patricia James*, 651/266-6639)

Commissioner Kramer reported that the Zoning Committee laid this case over to September 25, 2008 meeting.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

#08-114-408 T-Mobile (1551 Payne) – Conditional Use Permit for a cellular telephone antenna on a freestanding monopole. 1551 Payne Avenue, SW corner at Hoyt. (Sarah Zorn, 651/266-6570)

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the conditional use permit with conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#08-114-733 T-Mobile (1906 Stillwater) – Conditional Use Permit for a cellular telephone antenna on a freestanding monopole with modification of required setback; 85 ft. required, 65 ft. proposed. 1906 Stillwater Avenue between Algonquin and Hazel. (Sarah Zorn, 651/266-6570)

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Kramer moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the conditional use permit with conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#08-107-826 Stephen Law – Establishment of nonconforming use status as a duplex. 451 Jayne Street between Conway and Wilson. (*Patricia James*, 651/266-6639)

Commissioner Kramer reported that the Zoning Committee laid this case over to August 14, 2008 meeting.

Commissioner Faricy mentioned that there was discussion at the Zoning Committee meeting regarding monopoles that are going up all over the city. She recommended that the Planning Commission study monopole locations to see if there are places where they should not go. New monopoles maybe located on sites that would be good for development, but once the monopole is up, the options for development may no longer be viable.

### VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee

<u>Economic Development Strategy</u> – Staff presentation by Ellen Muller, Economic Development Manager in PED. (*Ellen Muller*, 651/266-6605)

Chair Alton thanked Ms. Muller coming to today's meeting and said the Economic Development Strategy was formally announced in July at a press conference by the Mayor and the City's development partners. Commission members received a copy in their packets for the meeting.

Ms. Muller said she was very pleased to assume her new position in PED to implement the Economic Development Strategy. She the primary goal is to foster economic growth by maintaining, creating and attracting more and better jobs in the City and for its residents. Saint Paul aspires to be "the Most Livable City in America" and that includes economic sustainability.

Ms. Muller described each of the six strategies in the report and examples of actions that she and the City's economic development partners will take: 1) business retention and expansion; 2) business attraction; 3) *Invest Saint Paul* area initiatives; 4) streamlining the development process; 5) workforce development; and 6) Downtown revitalization. Ms. Muller encouraged the Planning Commission to review the entire document and to share comments, ideas or contacts with her so that these strategies can be implemented effectively.

Larry Soderholm explained the Economic Development Strategy's relationship to the Comprehensive Plan. It is part of the sustainability framework contained in the Introductory Chapter of the new Comprehensive Plan. Penny Simison is working on a draft of the chapter and it will go to the Comprehensive Planning Committee in September. The sustainability framework includes environmental, economic, and social components, which all need to work together. The six general strategies in the Economic Development Strategy will be in the Comprehensive Plan, but the specific actions will not be. The specifics change as market conditions change, whereas Comp Plan policies are intended to be valid for the next ten years.

Commissioner Spaulding was concerned about financing for small businesses.

Ms. Muller said certainly money is the key to many opportunities and there are usually more needs than money available. But there are STAR funds for cultural and neighborhood endeavors, as well as CDBG grants, HRA funds and small business loans with low interest rates. In some ways there are more resources available for smaller businesses than for bigger projects with larger financing gaps.

Commissioner Lu was concerned that the emphasis is on the downtown area and the City needs to look at economic development in neighborhoods.

Ms. Muller acknowledged this concern and cited some of the efforts underway along neighborhood business corridors. On the Central Corridor economic planning is happening simultaneously with LRT planning. The major transit investment will produce a lot of positive opportunities, but the City and the Metro Council are also working to minimize the negative effects that construction and parking changes will have on existing businesses. She said City actions also need to address the reality that some areas of the city have greater needs than others. Those neighborhoods that need assistance the most are where the City needs to focus. Her responsibilities are not limited to the downtown, but are citywide.

Commissioner Ward urged Ms. Muller to get more information out there to help prevent mortgage foreclosures. What is the plan and what resources are available and where can people get it?

Ms. Muller said that many of these resources already exist. The key is to track not only what City resources are available but also to know which neighborhood organizations are doing what. She believes that we owe it to our citizens to make information and programs for mortgage foreclosure prevention very accessible.

In conclusion, Ms. Muller invited the Planning Commission, along with current retailers and new short term retailers, to an event that will be at the Lowry Theater on August 19, 2008, from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. The event will celebrate downtown businesses' preparations for the Republican National Convention.

Commissioner Donnelly-Cohen reported on the meeting of the Comprehensive Planning Committee on August 5, 2008. The Committee reviewed and approved the public hearing draft of the Land Use Chapter, except for the land use maps. Some of the maps are still being worked on by the staff. The public hearing draft of the Land Use Chapter will ready for the next Planning Commission meeting, when the Committee will recommend releasing it and setting a public hearing date.

# VII. Neighborhood and Current Planning Committee

Commissioner Wencl announced the next meeting is on Wednesday, August 13, 2008.

### VIII. Communications Committee

No report.

## IX. Task Force Reports

None

## X. Old Business

None

### XI. New Business

Commissioner Kramer raised a problem with check cashing stores in Saint Paul. The Planning Commission spent a lot of time on this in the early 1990's and the City adopted a definition for currency exchanges that is identical to the State's definition. Businesses with a state currency exchange license are subject to some distance standards under City zoning. But Commissioner Kramer has become aware of at least three businesses that have gotten other types of state licenses that allow them to do the same thing as currency exchanges while evading the City's zoning standards, for example, the distance from residential zoning. Commissioner Kramer would like the Planning Commission to review the City's current definition of what a currency exchange is and making sure that the intent of the original ordinance is met. This would likely

mean the definition needs to be broadened.

Larry Soderholm said the staff will look into Commissioner Kramer's question and report back to the Zoning Committee to initiate a zoning text amendment if that is what needs to be done.

XII.	Adi	iournm	ent

Meeting adjourned at 9:41 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary Planning and Economic Development Department, City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,	Approved	
1	(Date)	
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Larry Soderholm, AICP	Marilyn Porter	
Planning Administrator	Secretary of the Planning Commission	

Butler\Fleming\August 8, 2008